

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11

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USIA-15 AID-20 DRC-01 EB-11 COME-00 DOTE-00 TRSE-00

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R 110620Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9517

INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: EGEN, PFOR, IR, AF

SUBJECT: DETAILS OF IRANIAN-AFGHAN TRANSIT AGREEMENT

REF: KABUL 5603

1. AFGHAN PRESS ANNOUNCED SIGNING ON SEPTEMBER 5 OF NEW TRANSIT AGREEMENT BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN AND IRAN REPLACING PREVIOUS AGREEMENT CONCLUDED FIFTEEN YEARS AGO.

2. AGREEMENT, WHICH WAS SIGNED BY AFGHAN PRESIDENT OF EXPORT PROMOTION IN MINISTRY OF COMMERCE FARID RAFIQ AND IRANIAN DIRECTOR GENERAL OF DOMESTIC TRADE DEPT IN MINISTRY OF ECONOMY IBRAHIM DAWARI, CONFIRMS BOTH COUNTRIES' MEMBERSHIP IN TIR CONVENTION (TRANSPORTES INTERNATIONAL ROUTIERE) WHICH ALLOWS TRANSIT OF GOODS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES WITHOUT CUSTOMS INSPECTION.

3. OTHER PRINCIPAL FEATURES OF NEW AGREEMENT ARE NEW TRANSIT ROUTES BETWEEN AND IN TWO SIGNATORY COUNTRIES, AND FREER
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USE OF IRANIAN RAILWAY SYSTEM BY AFGHAN TRANSPORTERS.

4. IN SEPARATE MEETING WITH FARID RAFIQ HE TOLD EMBOFFS IRANIANS HAVE GRANTED TWENTY PERCENT REDUCTION IN RAILWAY TARIFF FOR ALL AFGHAN GOODS CARRIED BY IRANIAN RAILWAYS. HE ADDED THAT AGREEMENT IS FOR FIVE-YEAR PERIOD WITH AUTOMATIC RENEWAL FOR ADDITIONAL FIVE YEARS IF NO OBJECTION POSED BY EITHER PARTY.

5. ACCORDING RAFIQ, ONLY STICKY POINT FOR IRANIANS WAS CONTROL OVER LONG-STANDING ILLEGAL SALES OF CONSUMER ITEMS BY AFGHAN TRANSITING TRADERS IN IRAN. UNDER NEW AGREEMENT, GOA OFFICE IN MESHED OR GOA EMBASSIES IN EUROPE WILL ISSUE LETTER OF GUARANTEE FOR GOODS TRANSITING IRAN WHICH WILL BE ACCEPTED AT FACE VALUE BY IRANIAN CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES. ALTERNATIVE IS FOR AFGHAN TRADER TO SURRENDER GOODS TO IRANIAN CUSTOMS WHEN ENTERING IRAN AND RECEIVE THEM AT AFGHAN BORDER WHEN EXITING IRAN. PRESENT LOOSE SYSTEM ALLOWS AFGHANS TO SELL CONSUMER ITEMS, INCLUDING MOTOR VEHICLES, IN IRAN AND EXIT COUNTRY ILLEGALLY WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF IRANIAN AUTHORITIES.

6. NEW AGREEMENT ALSO ALLOWS GOA PREFERENTIAL USE OF IRANIAN PORT OR PORTS ON PERSIAN GULF FOR IMPORT/EXPORT OF AFGHAN GOODS. RAFIQ IS HOPEFUL THAT AGREEMENT WILL ASSIST GOA EFFORTS INCREASE EXPORTS TO ARAB COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY DRIED FRUITS AND POSSIBLY AFGHAN MARBLE. CONCESSIONARY RAIL TRANSPORT CHARGES TO IRANIAN PORTS SHOULD MATERIALLY ASSIST THIS EXPORT EFFORT.

7. EMBASSY COMMENT: RAFIQ NOTED THAT IRANIANS EXPRESSED WISH THAT AFGHANS USE EITHER CHAHAR BAHAR OR KHORRANSHAHR AS PORTS IN LIEU OF BANDAR ABBAS WHICH IRANIANS PREFER TO USE PRIMARILY FOR MILITARY SHIPMENTS. EMBASSY ASSUMES KHORRAMSHAHR IS VIABLE ALTERNATIVE BUT CHAHAR BAHAR, ACCORDING TO MARITIME CHARTS, CURRENTLY IS NOT RPT NOT NAVIGABLE FOR OCEAN-GOING SHIPS.
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